

# Direct payments

To buy the help you need

## **Direct Payments**

This leaflet tells you about direct payments, a way that you can have more flexibility and control over the services you need.

### **What are direct payments?**

Direct payments are cash payments made to you to pay for social care services that you arrange yourself, instead of services being arranged or provided by the council. Under the direct payments scheme, you can decide who provides your care, at the place and time that suits you best. A direct payment is not a benefit and does not affect any benefits you may receive.

### **Who can get direct payments?**

Most people who are assessed as needing a social care service can receive direct payments. This includes people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, HIV/AIDS, mental health problems, older people and parents of disabled children.

You must be willing and able to take responsibility for arranging and purchasing your own services, and willing to agree to, sign a contract to enable the council to monitor the services you purchase. Some people will not be eligible for direct payments. We can advise you about this.

You are eligible if you are:

- Aged 16 or over and
- Assessed as needing social care services or
- A parent carer of a disabled child

If you are a carer, you may be eligible for a direct payment for a carer's service that helps you continue to care. We can advise you about this.

## **How does it all work?**

If you request direct payments, you will be in charge of organising your own care and paying for it. You will receive payment into your account to pay for services. You will need to keep records to show how you have spent the money, including any invoices and receipts.

We will:

- Assess whether you are entitled to social care services
- Assess whether you are entitled to direct payments
- Work with you to cost services
- Inform you of the options available to you to purchase services

- Arrange payments to you
- Monitor the cost and quality of services
- Review your needs and adjust your care plan if necessary

## **How much will I receive?**

The amount you receive will depend on:

- The areas of support/care services you have been assessed as needing
- What is going to be purchased by direct payments  
Some people may have to contribute towards the cost of their care.
- Depending on their individual circumstances. This will be discussed during your assessment. If you have to pay a charge, this will be taken into account when your direct payment is calculated.

## **Do I have to use direct payments?**

No. These are the options to choose from:

- You can decide to continue to receive care arranged or provided by social services
- You can choose to have direct payments.

- You can choose to have direct payments for part of your care services and let social services arrange the rest.

If you change your mind about receiving direct payments, you can go back to having services arranged for you.

### **What can the payments be spent on?**

Direct payments help people who want to manage their own support to improve their quality of life. They promote independence, choice and inclusion by enabling people to purchase the assistance or services that the council would otherwise provide in order for them to live in their own homes.

Direct payments must be used to pay for services that meet your assessed social care needs, which would otherwise be arranged or provided by social services. These include:

- Personal care
- Services that provide domestic assistance
- A short break in respite care
- Some types of equipment

As your needs change, you can alter the kind of care you purchase, with agreement from social services.

## **Are there situations where direct payments cannot be used?**

Direct payments cannot be used to:

- Pay for permanent residential care or nursing care
- Purchase equipment or services that are normally provided by health, housing or education services
- Employ a partner, spouse or relative or anyone who lives with you, (except in exceptional circumstances where care cannot be provided in any other way - we will discuss this with you at the time of your assessment)

## **What would my responsibilities be under the scheme?**

If you receive direct payments, you will be expected to:

- Sign a contract
- Set up an account with a bank or building society
- Organise your own services
- Use the money given to pay for services
- Assist in the monitoring of your care plan

- Keep proof of spending, and an agreed set of records for inspection

The council has a responsibility to ensure that any monies given to you to purchase services are used correctly. If you receive direct payments, you will have a contract with the council, setting out how they should be used. Direct payments may be withdrawn if you do not comply with the conditions of this contract.

### **How can I get help and support if I have direct payments or want to apply for them?**

Through the Direct Payments Project Officer who will advise and support you with things like:

- Preparing for the social services assessment
- Looking at different ways of achieving independent living
- Getting direct payments and other funding to pay for personal assistants to give you care at home.
- Recruiting and employing personal assistants or buying services from agencies

## **Information on direct payments**

Direct Payments Project Worker

Social Services

Slough Borough Council

Town Hall

Bath Road

Slough

Berkshire

SL1 3UQ

Tel: 07917 721720

Email: [cathryn.joiner@slough.gov.uk](mailto:cathryn.joiner@slough.gov.uk)

## **How to contact us**

You can contact the Community Care Services Department for advice and support, we are here to answer your calls from 9.00am to 5.00pm - Monday to Friday.

**Please phone us on 01753 690400**

You can email us at [communitycare@slough.gov.uk](mailto:communitycare@slough.gov.uk) or visit our website [www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk).

**Emergency calls received on the above number outside normal hours will be passed to our special emergency social care service.**

This leaflet can be made available on audio tape, in braille, large print and in other languages on request.

If you would like a copy of this document translated please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 690759. Alternatively please call Slough Translation and Interpreting Service on 01753 701157.

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